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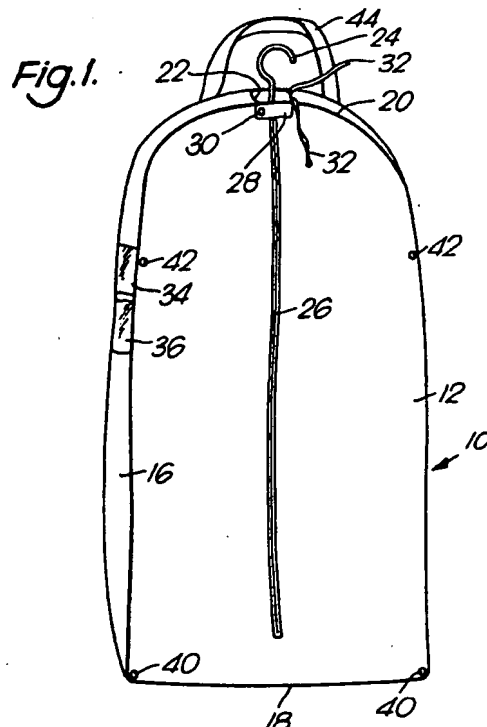
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(54) Holder for clothing

(57) A holder for clothing comprises a flexible cover (10) of light-weight synthetic material, particularly for holding clothing taken to or from dry-cleaning. The bag (10) has a continuous back panel (14) and a front panel (12) which is divided by a long vertical slit (26). The front and back panels (12, 14) are linked around their edges by a gusset (16) to give depth to the cover. At the top of the cover, the gusset (16) has a hanger opening (22) for a coat hanger to project through. The hanger opening (22) and the main access slit (26) communicate when the top of the slit (26) is unfastened, enabling the cover (10) to be wrapped around a hanging article of clothing and fastened without needing to manipulate the hanger. Fasteners (40, 42) are provided enabling the holder to be secured in a folded condition, and handles (44) allow it to be carried in this condition.



At least one drawing originally filed was informal and the print reproduced here is taken from a later filed formal copy.

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Fig. 1.

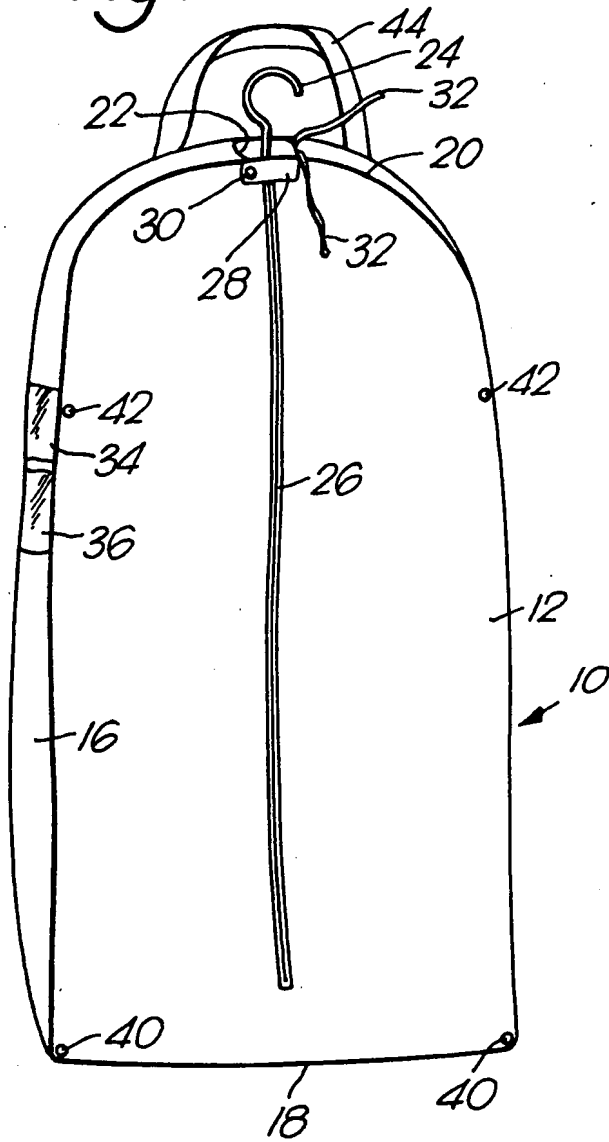
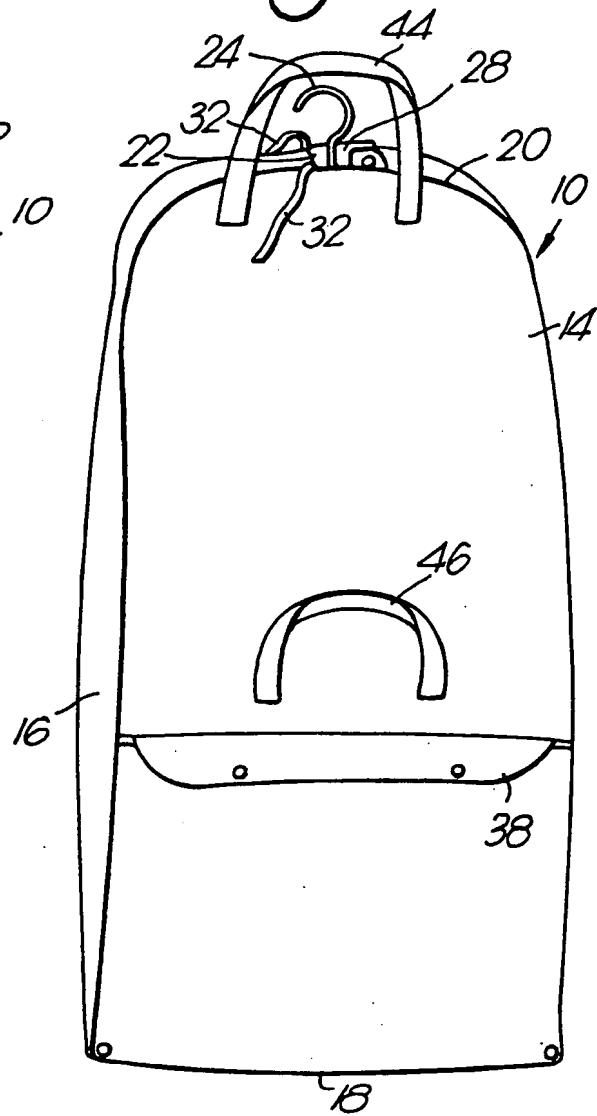


Fig. 2.



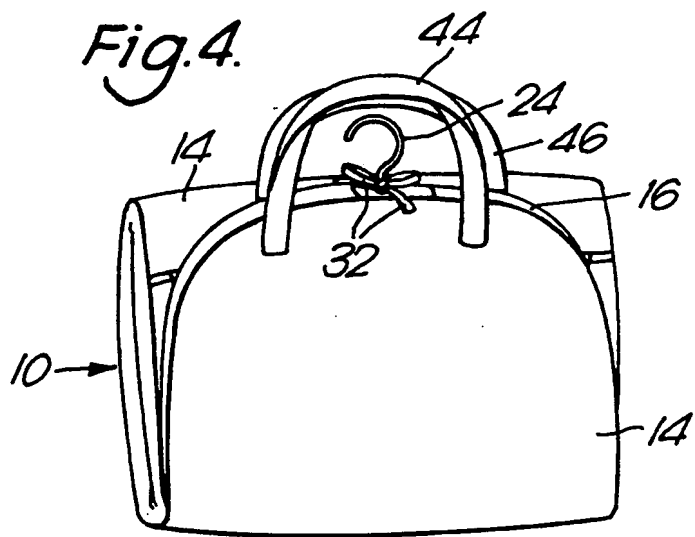
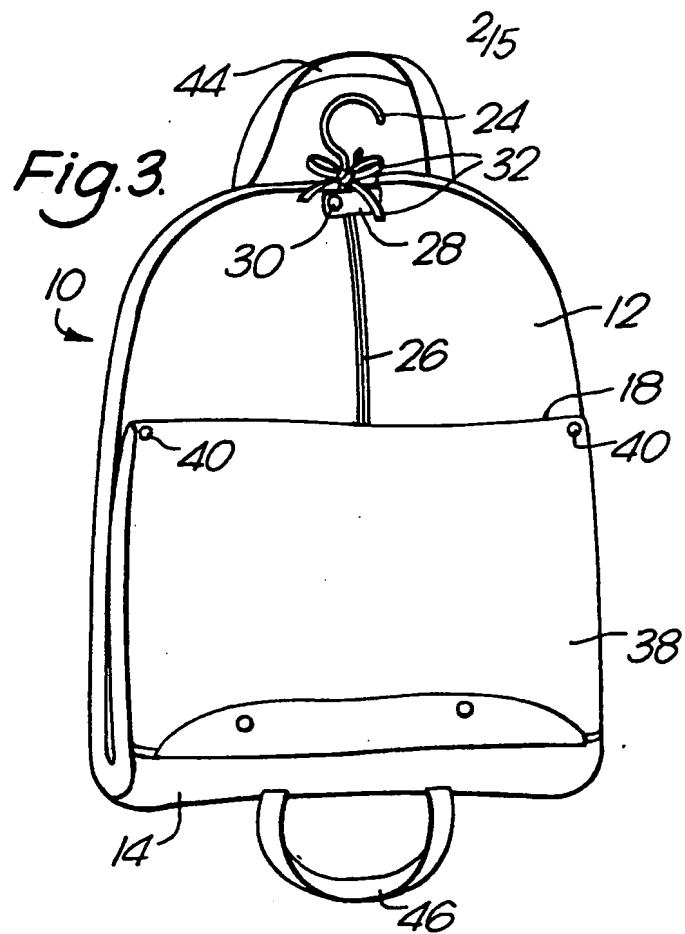


Fig. 5.

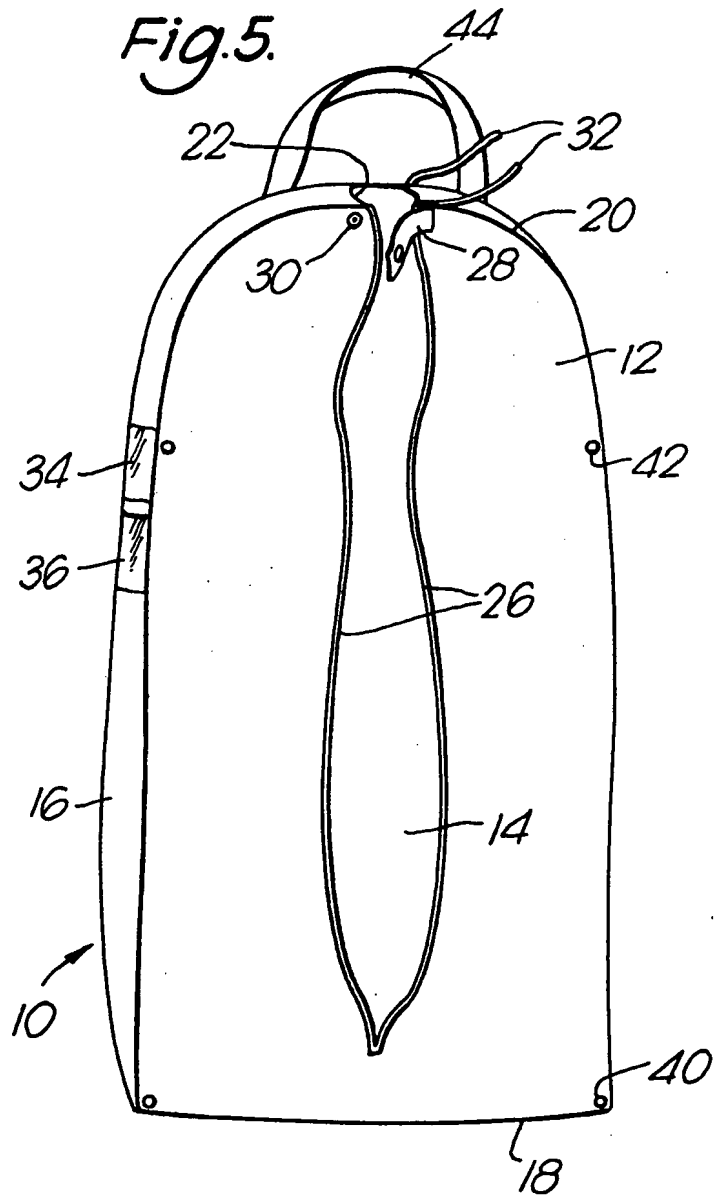


Fig. 6.

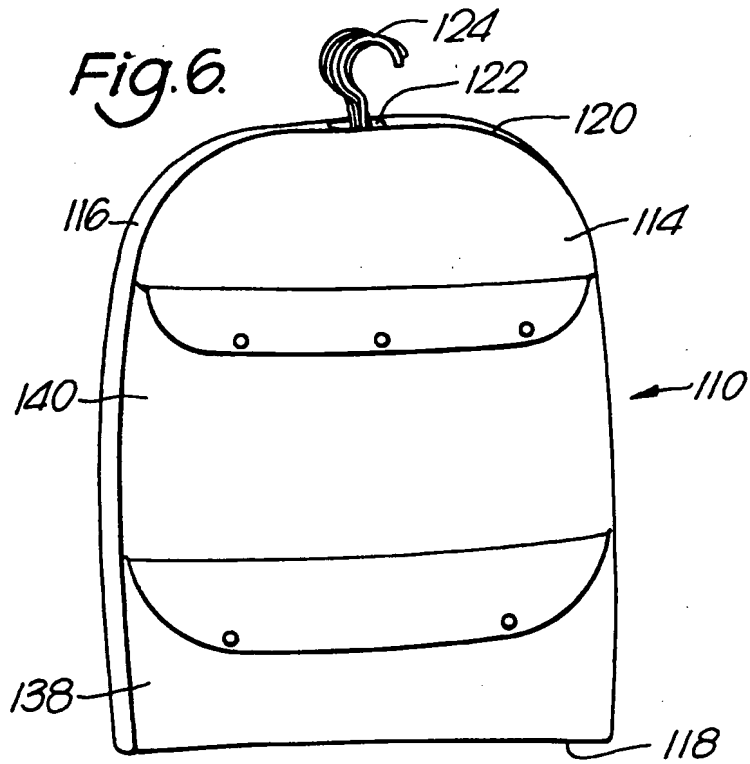


Fig. 7.

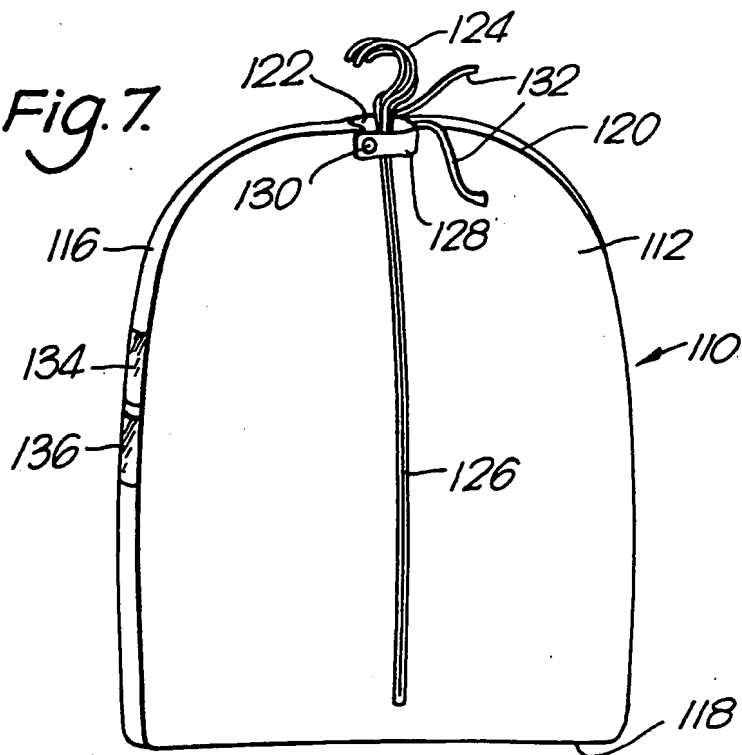


Fig. 8.

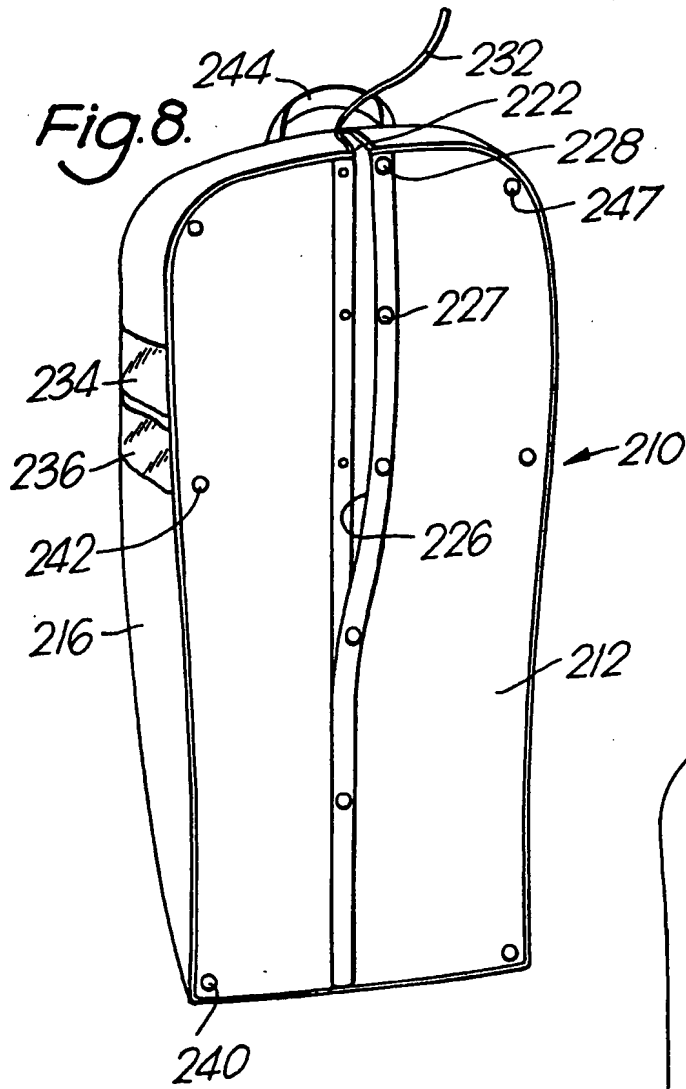
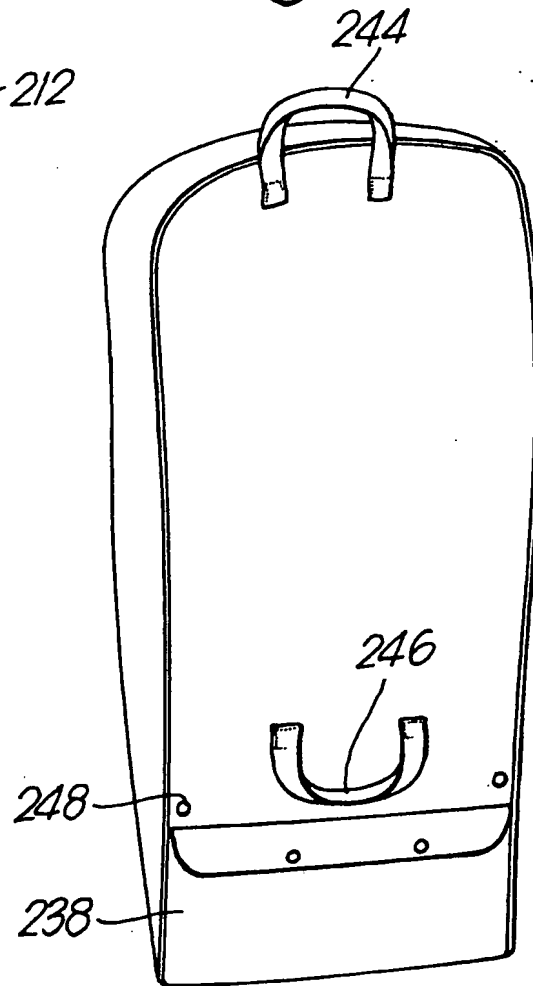


Fig. 9.



HOLDER FOR CLOTHING

This invention relates to holders for clothes, and in particular holders which can be used to protect
5 clothes before and after they are cleaned.

In recent years it has been common practice for dry-cleaned clothes to be returned, after cleaning, wrapped in a disposable plastic film. We have noted that indiscriminate disposing of this film is environmentally
10 undesirable, and can be a danger to animals and small children.

The conventional dry-cleaning procedure is also highly wasteful of the wire hangers that are used. Dry-cleaning operators issue these in enormous quantities
15 with cleaned clothing: only some are re-used and very many are simply thrown away.

We have appreciated that it would be highly desirable to provide a new type of re-usable protective holder for clothes, and in particular one which could be
20 used to protect dry-cleaned clothes.

Protective covers for clothes are well known in the art. Many will be familiar with the zip-fastenable flat bags in which suits and dresses are carried from one place to another and which help to stop them being
25 crushed. Generally these comprise a flexible cover with a main opening through which the article of clothing can

be inserted. The main opening may be down the centre of the front panel of the cover, diagonally down the front panel or down an edge of the holder. Depending to some extent on the intended use, the cover may contain a
5 built-in interior hanger bar on which clothing can be hung, either directly or via a conventional hook hanger, or the cover may have a hole through the top through which the hook or the conventional hanger is inserted from below.

10 While such covers, or light-weight versions thereof, would provide effective protection for cleaned articles, we have appreciated that they would have serious drawbacks if used for our new aim, which preferably relates to the covering of large numbers of items of
15 clothing e.g. in a commercial dry-cleaners. In particular, it would be very slow and awkward to insert large numbers of articles of hung clothing into the conventional covers.

In the invention, we provide a holder for hung
20 clothing in which a main opening allowing the bulk of the clothing to enter the flexible cover, and a top opening through which the top (usually a hook) of the hanger emerges, are connectable together to form a single opening. This single opening when opened up enables the
25 cover to be wrapped around one or more articles of clothing, on a hanger or hangers, in a simple movement

which leaves the top of the hanger or hangers projecting out through the hanger hole at the top of the cover so that it only remains to close the main opening. The latter may have a releasable fastener such as a zip or
5 one or more press-fasteners.

In particular, it will be appreciated that by virtue of this feature, the hook of a hanger on which clothing is hung need not be manoeuvred from below through the top hanger hole of the holder. Instead, as described
10 above, the holder cover can be wrapped around clothing on its hanger even while the clothing and hanger remain suspended from a support, or when the clothing and hanger are simply laid down onto the opened cover.

The cover may be made from a lightweight fabric e.g. of nylon or polyester cotton, so as to fold away to a
15 small volume when not being used. Preferably, it is also able to withstand repeated dry-cleaning e.g. 30 or more or preferably 70 or more times. Also, it is preferably able to be repeatedly waterproofed. The construction of
20 the cover and the arrangement of its openings may take a number of different forms.

The usual construction of the holder will involve a front panel and a back panel, with a gusset joining them around their edges to give depth. At the top of the
25 holder, usually the panels and gusset form shoulder portions which, as a top portion of a cover, rest on the

corresponding shoulder portions of hung clothing when it is in the holder. The hanger opening is preferably in the centre of the top portion, which as mentioned may be a gusset panel linking front and back panels at the top of the holder.

In the preferred embodiments, the hanger opening is substantially deep. That is, preferably it extends from the front wall to the back wall. Where the top portion is formed by a gusset panel, the hanger opening may entirely divide this panel into side portions.

The main opening for insertion and removal of clothing preferably extends at least half, more preferably substantially all of the vertical length of the cover. It may extend down a face e.g. a front wall of the cover, or it may extend down an edge or gusset panel. Preferably, the main opening extends down the front wall of the cover so dividing this wall. In this way the hanger opening can be in use a horizontally-extending opening, while the main opening extends vertically away from their point of connection. This configuration allows the top part of the cover to be opened up wide without requiring the top shoulder portions e.g. top gussets extending away on either side of the hanger opening, to be openable.

Preferably a releasable fastener can be secured to close off the hanger opening from the main opening. This

may be e.g. a short flap or strap which connects across the top of the main opening adjacent the hanger hole. It may be a press-fastener. Indeed it may simply be the uppermost one of a series of fasteners used for closing the main opening. The provision of such a securement isolating the hanger hole helps to stop the top of the hanger from moving out of position when the clothing is contained in the holder.

For extra security, a fastener such as a tie or ties may be provided at the top of the holder adjacent the hanger opening, to secure to hanger tops projecting through it. This will stop hangers and their associated clothing from falling down inside the holder.

Bags which are designed to take long items, such as suits, coats or dresses, can be difficult to carry. Such bags are preferably adapted so that they can be carried in a secure folded condition. One way of achieving this is by providing vertically spaced handles on the casing e.g. one at the top and one at or near the bottom so that when these are held in one hand the holder naturally folds. For more security, or so that only one handle is needed, the exterior of the holder cover may be provided with releasable fasteners for holding it in a folded condition. The holder may be folded into two, or e.g. into three if it is very long. In the latter case a second handle may be provided part way up the wall of the

cover on the side opposite to that which is folded inward. Press-fasteners are suitable for securing these folded conditions, although other types such as zips or Velcro may be used.

5 The holder may comprise one or more pockets on the exterior of the cover. In particular, it may have a wide pocket which is wide enough to carry one or more clothes hangers e.g. at least 30cm wide. This enables the hangers to accompany the holder and hence reduces
10 instances of their being unnecessarily thrown away. Another use for such pockets is holding smaller items of clothing. A pocket may be positioned on the back panel of the cover.

Embodiments of the invention are now described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying
15 drawings in which :

Figure 1 is a front view of a clothes holder, a first embodiment;

Figure 2 is a back view of the holder of Fig. 1;

20 Figure 3 is a front view in a first folded condition;

Figure 4 is a front view in a second folded condition;

Figure 5 shows the holder of the first embodiment in
25 a open, unfastened condition;

Figures 6 and 7 are back and front views

respectively of a second embodiment of clothes holder,
and

Figures 8 and 9 are front and back views
respectively of a third embodiment.

5 Figs. 1 to 5 show a dry-cleaning bag 10 comprising a
front panel 12 and a back panel 14. The back and front
panels are connected by a gusset 16 which extends around
three edges of the bag , and joined together along the
lower edge 18. In the middle of the top end 20 of the
10 bag there is a hole 22 which accommodates a hanger hook
24. The bag is opened by a zip 26 which runs down the
centre of the front piece 12. A flap 28 separates the
hole from the zip. The flap is sewn onto the front piece
in one side of the zip and is releasably secured to the
15 other side of the zip by a press-stud 30. Ties 32 are
provided adjacent the hole 22. These can be wrapped
around the hook to stop it from falling out of the hole.

The bag is made from an opaque nylon or polyester
cotton material. A window 34 is provided in the gusset
20 so that the clothing in the bag can be seen while the bag
is hanging on the rack at the dry-cleaners. A
transparent pocket 36 is also provided on the gusset,
just underneath the window, so that an identification tag
can be attached to the bag.

25 A pocket 38 is situated on the back piece of the
bag. It is shaped to hold a hanger. Thus, when the bag

is returned to the dry-cleaners, the hanger is also returned.

The bag may be used in the following manner. A dry-cleaned article of clothing to be protected by the bag, which itself has been cleaned, is suspended by a hanger from a suitable point. The bag is then fully opened, by undoing the zip 26 and releasing the flap, as shown in Fig. 5. The hem of the clothing is then inserted into the top of the bag. The bag is then slid up around the clothing and the top of the bag placed over the shoulders of the hanger with the hook located in the hole. The zip is then closed and the press-stud of the flap is fastened. The tie is then secured around the hook (shown in Figs. 3 and 4).

When the cleaned clothes are collected, the bag may be folded for easier transportation. Press-studs 40 are located on the front piece at the lower edge 18 and press-studs 42 are located two-thirds of the way up the bag. The bag is then folded into the configuration shown in Fig. 3, and the press-studs 40,42 are joined to hold the fold in place. The bag is then folded again, into the configuration shown in Fig. 4. The two handles 44,46 are now close together and can be used to carry the bag. These handles are securely machined to the back panel 14.

It is not essential to have separate handles to carry the bag. The hanger may be used as a handle.

Once the cleaned clothes have reached their destination, they may remain in the bag or be rehung. The hanger can be placed in the pocket 38 and when further articles of clothing are to be taken to the dry-
5 cleaners, they can be placed in the bag and the whole left for cleaning.

A second embodiment of the invention, shown in Figs. 6 and 7, is a hanging shirt bag 110. It comprises a front piece 112 and a back piece 114, connected by an
10 extra-wide gusset 116 along three sides of the bag. At the lower edge 118 the front and back pieces are joined together. At the top edge 120 the bag has a hanger hole 122 deep enough for five hangers 124. A zip 126 allows closure of the opening for the bag. The zip and the hole
15 are separated by a flap 128 which is sewn onto the front piece at one side of the zip and is releasably securable to the other side of the zip by a press-stud 130. The hangers may be secured in the hole by ties 132.

As before, side window 134 and pocket 136 are
20 provided for identification.

Two pockets 138, 140 are provided on the back panel. The first pocket 138 is designed to take dirty shirts and the second pocket 140 is designed to take the hangers.

The shirts are inserted into the bags in a similar
25 way to that described above for the first embodiment. For this embodiment, up to five shirts hung together can

be simultaneously inserted into the bag.

Figures 8 and 9 show a third embodiment , generally similar to the first embodiment. It is made of panels of light synthetic fabric e.g. nylon or polyester. Front panel 212 is in effect two separate panels, divided by the main access slit 226 which extends centrally down the full height of the cover 210. The panel edges bordering the slit 226 are double thickness and provided with a series of press-fasteners 227, including an uppermost press-fastener 228 right at the top of the slit 226, adjacent the transition to the gusset panel 216 where it forms the shoulders of the holder. The top of access slit 226 extends continuously into the hanger slit 222 which runs horizontally back, separating the gusset 216 into two sides, all the way to the back panel. Hanger slit 222 has no defined width when closed, but its flexibility allows hanger stems to project through. It is closed, when the cover is closed, by the top most fastener 228 of the main access slit 226. Press-fasteners 240 at the bottom of the front panel 212 can join to press-fasteners 242 as in the first embodiment, to make a first fold in the body of the cover. Further press-fasteners 248 about 1-fifth the distance up the back panel can then engage press-fasteners 247 at the top of the front panel, to secure a second fold with the two vertically-spaced handles 244, 246 on the back panel

adjacent for carrying, in the same way as in Fig. 4.

The length of the holder is about 140cm and its width about 60cm.

5 A single pocket 238 with a securable flap is provided at the bottom of the back panel, below the press-fasteners 248. It extends the full width of the holder and can easily take a number of clothes hangers.

Side window 234 and window pocket 236 are provided as before, made from translucent plastics mesh.

10 At the back end of hanger slot 222, a ribbon tie 232 is provided for securing hanger heads.

It will be appreciated the size of the holder of the present invention will depend upon the type of garments for which it is intended. Usually, however, it will be
15 between 70 and 150cm in length, between 35 and 80cm in width, and the gusset providing it with depth may be between e.g. 8 and 20cm wide.

CLAIMS:

1. A holder for protecting clothing, comprising a flexible cover with a top portion which rests in use over the top of a hanger and clothing in the holder, and enclosing sides extending down from the top portion to cover the clothing, there being a hanger opening in the top portion through which in use the top of the hanger projects to the outside to enable hanging thereby, and a releasably closable main opening in the sides of the cover to allow the clothing on the hanger to be inserted in and removed from the holder,

wherein the main opening when open is interconnectable with the hanger opening so that clothing hung on a hanger can be wrapped in the cover and the side opening closed, leaving the top of the hanger projecting through the hanger opening, while the hanger and clothing remain hanging from a support engaging the top of the hanger.

2. A holder according to claim 1 in which the enclosing sides comprise front and back walls, and edge gussets joining them.

3. A holder according to claim 1 or claim 2 in which the top portion comprises a gusset connecting a front wall and back wall of the cover.

4. A holder according to claim 2 or claim 3 in

which the hanger opening extends substantially from the front wall to the back wall.

5 5. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims in which the main opening is an elongate slit with a releasable main fastener for holding it closed.

6. A holder according to claim 5 in which the main fastener comprises at least one press fastener, or a zip-fastener.

10 7. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims in which the main opening extends downwardly, dividing a front wall of the cover.

8. A holder according to claim 7 in which the main opening extends centrally down the front wall.

15 9. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims in which the top of the main opening has a releasable top fastener which, when released, interconnects the main opening and the hanger opening.

10 10. A holder according to claim 9 in which the releasable top fastener is a press fastener.

20 11. A holder according to claim 9 or claim 10 in which the top fastener is the top one of a series of fasteners forming a main fastener for the main opening.

25 12. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims in which, when interconnected, the main opening and hanger opening form a continuous slit in the cover extending up the front wall thereof to the top portion

and rearwardly to the back of the top portion.

13. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims having an exterior pocket on a back wall thereof, capable of holding one or more clothes hangers.

5 14. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims comprising means for securing it releasably in a bodily folded condition.

15 15. A holder according to claim 14 in which the securing means comprise complementary press fastener elements on the cover exterior, vertically spaced on the cover so that they can meet and fasten when it is folded.

16. A holder according to claim 14 or claim 15 in which the securing means enable the holder to be secured in a twice-folded condition and comprise

15 first complementary fastener elements vertically spaced on the exterior of a front wall of the cover, with a said first element at or adjacent the bottom of the holder and a complementary said element part of the way up the holder, to retain a first fold, and

20 second complementary fastener elements, with a said second element on the exterior of a back wall of the cover partway up, and a complementary said second element on the front wall at or adjacent the top, to retain a second fold.

25 17. A holder according to any one of the preceding claims, having at least one fastener disposed adjacent

(the hanger opening for fastening to a hanger top projecting through.

18. A holder for protecting clothing, substantially as described and shown herein with reference to the
5 accompanying drawings.